Phasing-Out Ontario's Gas-Fired Power Plants by 2030 Campaign: FAQs

1. *Why is Ontario planning to increase its gas-fired electricity generation?*

Ontario is planning to increase its gas-fired electricity generation by more than 300% between 2025 and 2030 due to: a) closure of the Pickering Nuclear Station; b) a forecast 1% per year rise in the demand for electricity; and c) the re-building of the aging Darlington and Bruce nuclear reactors.

2. *What are the consequences of this change for greenhouse gas (GHG) pollution and the climate emergency?*

The GHG pollution of Ontario's electricity sector is forecast to rise from 2.5 million tonnes (Mt) in 2017 to 11.0 Mt in 2030.

According to Ontario's Auditor General, the province must reduce its GHG pollution by an additional 7.3 to 14 million million tonnes in 2030 to achieve its climate target.   The good news is that phasing out the gas-fired power plants will provide all or virtually all of the incremental GHG pollution reductions that Ontario needs to achieve its 2030 climate target.

3. *What impact will this have on municipalities?*

Phasing out gas-fired electricity generation will make Ontario's electricity system carbon-free.   This will reduce the electricity-related GHG pollution of Ontario's municipalities and hence make it easier for them to achieve their climate targets.

4. What alternatives are available to meet Ontario's electricity needs?

Ontario can phase-out its gas-fired power plants by a combination of energy efficiency investments, Made-in-Ontario wind and solar energy and Quebec water power.   In addition, Hydro Quebec's water reservoirs can act like a giant battery to back-up our intermittent wind and solar energy.

5. *How do the costs of these alternatives affect electricity rates to consumers?*

Phasing-out Ontario's gas-fired power plants will reduce our need to import fracked gas from Pennsylvania and western Canada.   Since the gas plants' fuel costs are approximately 3 cents per kWh, our electricity costs will fall if we replace them with lower cost alternatives.   The good news is that energy efficiency investments are a lower cost option to keep our lights on.   In addition, spot market water power imports from Quebec are also a lower cost alternative during many hours of the year. [create link to "Ontario's Electricity Options" fact sheet]

On the other hand, the costs of new wind and solar generating stations and long-term firm water power contracts with Quebec would be greater than 3 cents per kWh.   Fortunately, the costs of these options are all **less than half the cost** of re-building the aging reactors at the Darlington and Bruce Nuclear Stations. [create link to "Defund Nuclear" fact sheet] As a consequence, if Ontario ramps down its planned expenditures on high-cost nuclear re-builds while it invests in Made-in-Ontario wind and solar energy and signs long-term contracts for Quebec water power, it will be able to simultaneously phase-out its gas plants and lower our electricity bills.

6. *What are the implications of these choices for the economic viability and resilience of Ontario communities?*

By investing in energy efficiency and wind and solar energy we can create jobs and electricity supply sources in every community in Ontario and reduce our dependency on 32 large gas-fired power plants and fossil imports from Pennsylvania and western Canada.

7. *What role can municipalities play in this decision?*

In March 2020 Mayor Hazel McCallion held a press conference outside the Lakeview Coal-Fired Power Plant in Mississauga and asked the Premier of Ontario, Mike Harris, to shut it down.   Thanks to Mayor McCallion's leadership, Lakeview was shut down and in 2002 Premier Eves' Government committed Ontario to a complete coal phase-out by 2015.

Similarly, strong leadership from Ontario's municipalities can help persuade the Government of Ontario to phase-out our gas-fired power plants by 2030 and to cap their annual GHG pollution at 2.5 million tonnes as soon as possible.

For more information please see: *Phasing-Out Ontario's Gas-Fired Power Plants: A Road Map* [create link]